

Director's Report

March 2003

Marc Gaspard, executive director

WASHINGTON
**HIGHER
EDUCATION**
COORDINATING BOARD

Legislative budget process takes center stage

By Marc Gaspard

With only about a month to go in the regular legislative session, budget writers in both houses are dealing with a shortfall that is even greater than expected. The economic forecast released on Wednesday showed the state will collect \$238.3 million less revenue over the next biennium – adding up to a budget shortfall of about \$2.6 billion.

Still, we are optimistic about the future of the Board's top budget priority: funding the State Need Grant program, which helps the state's lowest-income students go to college. It appears that program funding over the next two years will go a long way toward keeping pace with tuition increases and growing enrollment vacancies over the past month.

March 26 is **Higher Education Day** in Washington. First observed in

the state in 1999, the celebration was designed to focus attention on public support for higher education and provide an opportunity for the state's alumni associations to share their concerns with elected officials. Alumni leaders from the six public 4-year schools are expected in Olympia for Higher Education Day.

Gov. Locke has proclaimed March 27 **All-Washington Academic Team Day**. During a noon ceremony at South Puget Sound Community College, 65 students representing each of the state's 34 community and technical colleges will be honored for academic achievement and community service.

The community and technical school students were nominated for recognition through a state program patterned after the national All-USA Today Academic Team, initiated by Phi Theta Kappa, the two-year college international honor society.

Displaced Homemaker Program to fund new projects

Created in 1979, the Displaced Homemaker Program provides intensive career counseling, job search assistance and other help to those who have spent at least 10 years as unsalaried homemakers and now need to support themselves or their families.

According to Manager **Brenda Landers**, the program is a success. In 2001-2002, more than 26,000 displaced homemakers received counseling, job search/ resume help, and local referrals. Nearly 750 people participated in one-on-one counseling, peer support groups, and a 50-hour education and training program.

By the March 21 deadline this year, 14 public and private non-profit groups and colleges had applied for 2003-05 Displaced Homemaker Program funds in one of three categories:

Displaced Homemaker Center – which will provide comprehensive, ongoing services to displaced homemakers in highly populated areas; *Program of Service* – a smaller scale version of a Displaced Homemaker Center; or *Mini-Program* – which will provide intermittent services, and may be designed to serve targeted rural communities or a targeted population of displaced homemakers. The *Mini-Program* is new this year.

The HECB administers the program, with guidance from a statewide advisory committee. The advisory committee will make funding recommendations to the HECB in late April, and the organizations will be notified of contract awards in early May.



Third Northwest Regional GEAR UP Conference May 14-16 ? Doubletree Hotel ? Bellevue *Northwest Bridges 2003:*

- Evaluating Our Efforts
- Improving our Programs
- Telling Our Stories
- Sustaining Our Work

Featured presenters: **Kati Haycock**: "From our Agenda to the Nation's Agenda" ? **William G. Tierney**: "Preparing for College: Building Expectations, Changing Realities"? **Hector Garza**: "Sustaining GEAR UP Means Focusing on What Matters Most"

For more information: 360.753.7835

HECB fills staff vacancies

Over the past month, HECB has welcomed: **Sara Benson-Poort**, GET customer service; Sara graduated from Evergreen and has worked in customer service/training with Healthcare.com. **Jeffrey Powell**, program coordinator with State Work Study; Jeffrey has a B.A. from the University of Vermont and has managed overseas public health projects for John Snow, Inc. **Mary Swinney**, State Need Grant Program & Future Teacher's Conditional Scholarship Program; Mary has a B.A. in computer science and joins the HECB from the Port of Seattle.

Latest Education Cost Study published

HECB Policy Associate **Kathy Raudenbush** has put the finishing touches on the 2001-02 Education Cost Study. Produced every four years by the HECB, the study provides detailed instructional cost information about the state's public two-year and four-year institutions. The study looks at state appropriations and tuition revenue to summarize the cost of instruction at all six four-year schools and 34 community or technical colleges in Washington.

Comparisons drawn by the analysis include undergraduate costs compared to graduate costs; the difference between upper and lower divisions in the four-year schools; 2001-02 instructional costs compared to 1997-98 dollars; and the ratio of students to faculty at all institutions.

The study also generates a number of ratios between some of the data, such as the ratio of graduate costs to under-graduate costs. In each of the next three years – prior to the 2005-06 education cost study – HECB staff will apply these ratios to subsequent enrollments and funding levels in order to determine the annual cost of instruction at all four-year schools. The cost study serves a number of needs, including cost analyses by the HECB, Legislature, institutions, Office of Financial Management (OFM) and others, as well as providing information to students.

WICHE celebrates golden anniversary

A gallon of gas cost 21¢, a new home could be had for about \$16,000, and Patti Page was singing “*Doggie in the Window*” when the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education compact was signed into law in 1953. Since then, WICHE has grown into a 15-state organization that promotes innovation, cooperation and resource sharing; all in the name of educational access and excellence for people living in the West.

WICHE is the only organization in the West that focuses exclusively on higher education issues, from accountability to tuition and fees to distance learning. Its primary issue – access – has been one of the region's most pressing educational and social issues, from the days of the GI Bill to the present.

Through WICHE, Washington residents can enroll in eligible programs at reduced tuition rates in 14 states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

The HECB is directed by statute to coordinate state participation in WICHE student exchange programs and to report periodically on the program. Financial Aid Associate

Director **Betty Gebhardt** and Program Manager **Linda Langen** recently completed a report on the state's exchange programs. Washington state's three commissioners are Senator **Don Carlson** (WICHE vice chairman), **Debora Merle** (Gov. Locke's policy advisor for higher education), and **Marc Gaspard**.



WICHE student exchange programs in Washington include:

Western Undergraduate Exchange – Undergraduate students can enroll at participating two- and four-year colleges and universities. Students pay 150 percent of the receiving school's resident tuition, a significant savings over nonresident tuition.

Western Regional Graduate Program – Graduate students can enroll in graduate programs at resident tuition rates.

Professional Student Exchange – Students can receive conditional loans to study two professional degree programs not offered in Washington. In return, participants agree to practice in a state shortage area.

GET program update as of 3.25.2003



Current active accounts: 30,503
Total new enrollment for 2002-03: 6,470
(since March 1: 2,802)
Total payments received: \$205.4 million

Total value of accounts and total units purchased will be available after March statistics are completed

Enrollment ends 3.31.2003; will re-open 9.15.2003

GET Committee will meet April 14 to hear a recommendation for a unit price increase, effective May 1